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# *The President's Daily Brief*

*17 August 1972*

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# THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

17 August 1972

## PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

In the Vietnam fighting, South Vietnamese forces are heavily engaged in the southern provinces. *(Page 1)*

North Vietnamese propaganda continues to stress the theme of self-reliance for the long fight ahead. Recent aerial photography indicates that supplies from China continue to flow over the Dong Dang rail line. *(Page 2)*

Lao Government task forces moving toward the Plaine des Jarres still have met only light resistance. *(Page 3)*

Another attempt was made yesterday on the life of Moroccan King Hassan. *(Page 4)*

Yesterday's hijacking of an airliner to Chile by Argentine revolutionaries has put Chilean President Allende in a difficult position. *(Page 5)*



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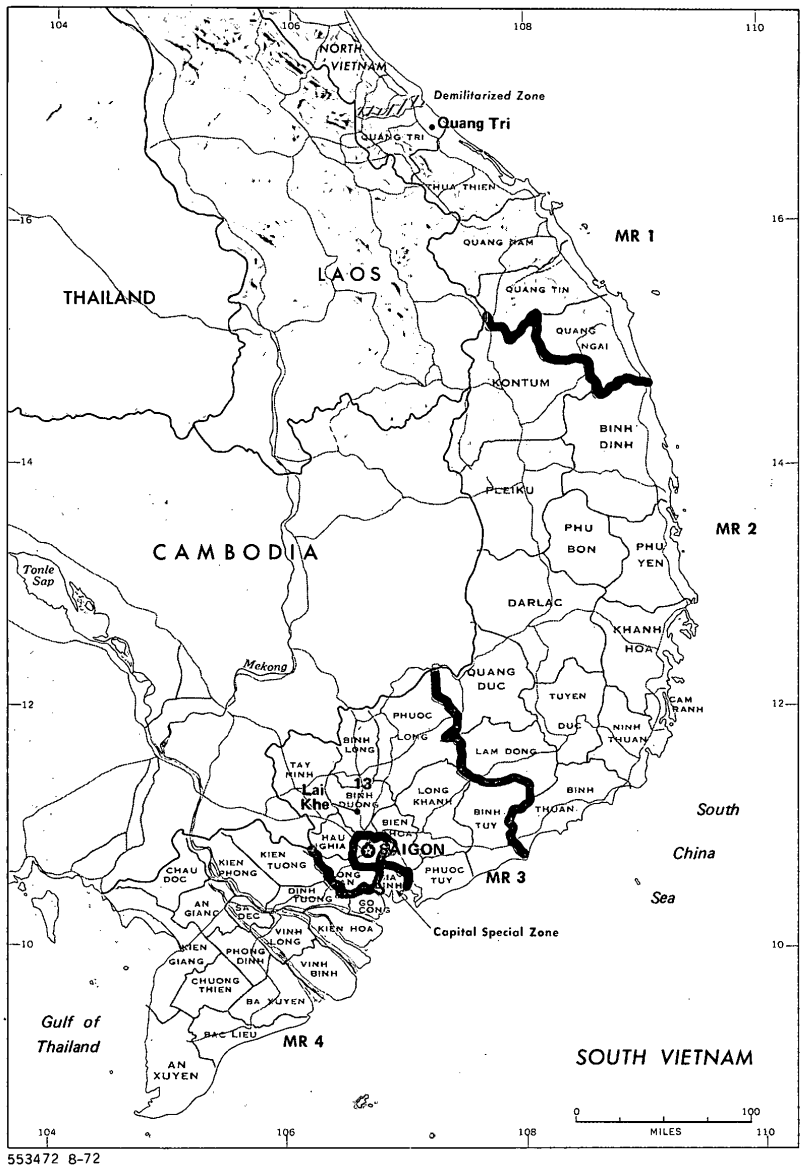


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## SOUTH VIETNAM

South Vietnamese forces are heavily engaged in the southern provinces. The sharpest fighting has occurred in southwestern Dinh Tuong Province, where South Vietnamese regulars suffered moderate losses in a series of clashes with elements of the North Vietnamese 88th Regiment. The Communists are maintaining pressure against government outposts and district towns in Kien Phong, nearby Kien Hoa, and Kien Giang provinces.

North of Saigon, ground action has slackened around Lai Khe, but substantial enemy mortar and rocket fire is being directed against South Vietnamese positions in Binh Duong, Tay Ninh, and Phuoc Long provinces. Route 13, just north of Lai Khe, is now closed to traffic, but South Vietnamese forces have been able to keep the road open to the south.

On the Quang Tri front, the infantry operations of both sides are being hampered by artillery fire. Communist shelling has been heavy throughout Quang Tri Province and Communist units are also complaining about allied firepower.





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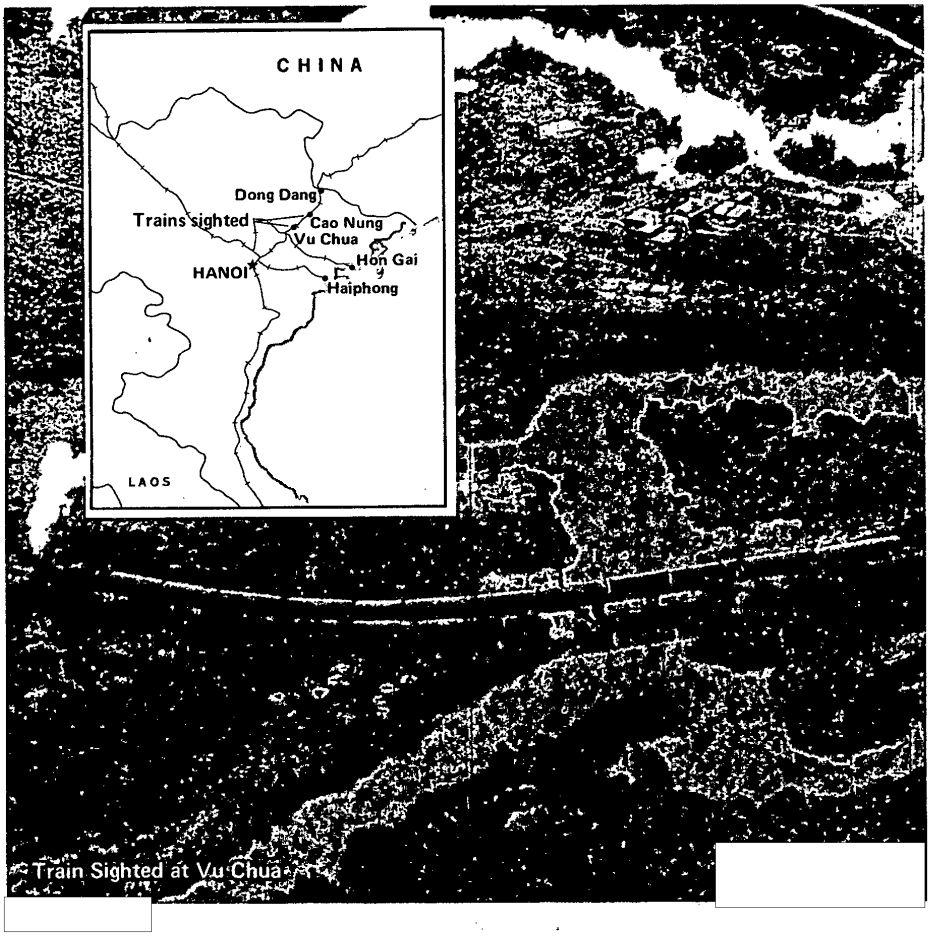
North Vietnam Maintaining Supply Flow from China

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## NORTH VIETNAM

*An article in the July issue of Hanoi's ideological journal, Hoc Tap, appears to be another in a series intended to steel the resolve of the party cadres for a long fight ahead. Its import, despite qualifying phrases, is that North Vietnam now more than ever must rely on its own resources and that it cannot trust its two major allies, China and the Soviet Union, to protect its interests. This message has received wide distribution in recent months, but seldom has been put so starkly. Moreover, the article is pessimistic about the chances that the anti-war movement in the US will have a significant effect on the election or on US policy. The author concludes that no matter what happens elsewhere, it is military victory and the perseverance of the Vietnamese Communists that really count.*

* * *

Aerial photography [redacted] indicates that supplies from China continue to flow over the high-capacity Dong Dang rail line. Two southbound trains were observed on that date--one of 30 cars at Cao Nung and another of 12 cars at Vu Chua. Photography also provides evidence of turnover in the supply stockpiles at major rail yards along the line. 25X1





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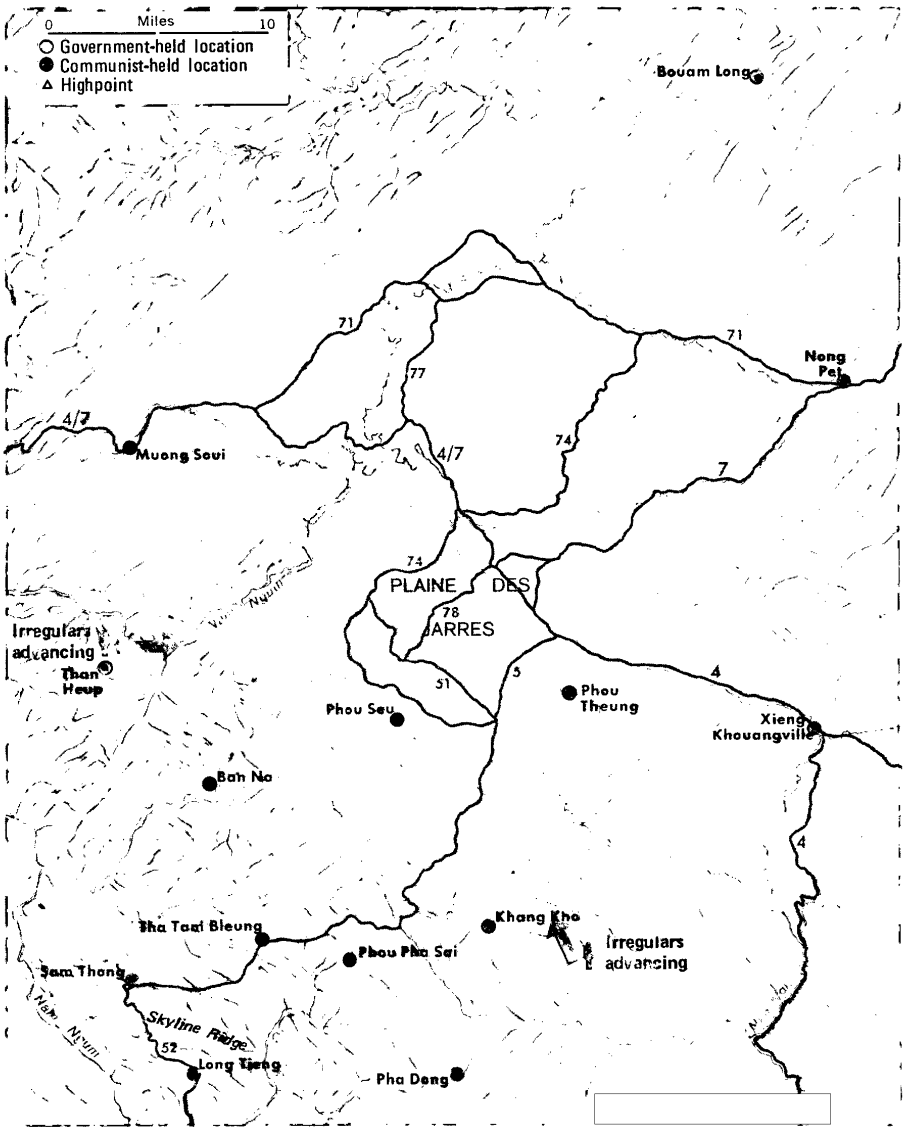
## LAOS: PLAINE DES JARRES AREA

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## LAOS

Government task forces moving toward the Plaine des Jarres from the west and south still have met only light resistance. Additional battalions of Vang Pao's tribesmen, fresh from several weeks of retraining, will soon be committed to the drive.

*Vang Pao is seeking to force the North Vietnamese to abandon positions west of the Plaine, and eventually the Plaine itself, by threatening their supply depots and infiltration routes. His basic objective is to push the Communist troops back far enough to forestall another major dry season offensive against the Sam Thong - Long Tieng complex.*

*Apart from this tactical consideration, Prime Minister Souvanna wants Vang Pao to take as much territory as possible on the assumption that government control of the Plaine would strengthen Vientiane's bargaining position should peace talks begin soon. Last year, however, the Communists terminated preliminary contacts in Vientiane after Vang Pao moved onto the Plaine.*





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## MOROCCO

Another attempt was made yesterday on the life of King Hassan as he was returning to Rabat from a private visit to France. The F-5 squadron of the air force, which had remained loyal to him during last year's military coup attempt, fired on his plane as it entered Moroccan airspace. The King's plane was damaged, but was able to make a safe landing. Later, several planes strafed the Rabat airport and the King's palace.

Last night the Moroccan Army occupied the F-5 base at Kenitra without resistance and arrested some suspects. The pilot of the plane that attacked the King's aircraft is said to have been captured after parachuting near Rabat. Five other squadron members, including the air force deputy commander, escaped to Gibraltar in a helicopter and were taken into custody.

*Following last year's attempted coup, some of Morocco's handful of F-5 pilots were reported to be anti-Hassan*

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*The air force commander, Colonel Hassan Lyoussi, was formerly head of Morocco's military intelligence, and was handpicked for his current position last May by the King. This appointment may have created some ill feelings among air force officers who had hoped that the command would be awarded within the service.*

*The press this morning reports the suicide of the defense minister, General Mohamed Oufkir, during the night. This is the first indication of the involvement of anyone other than members of the F-5 squadron in the assassination attempt.*





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## NOTES

Argentina-Chile: Yesterday's hijacking of an airliner to Chile by six Argentine revolutionaries who broke out of an army-run prison has put President Allende in a difficult situation. Allende would like to maintain cordial relations with Argentine President Lanusse, but Chile has a long tradition of providing haven to South American dissidents of all stripes, and to return the escaped extremists would invite harsh reaction from many members of Allende's government. Allende's own Socialist Party, stung by the arrests for banditry last month of some members of its extremist wing, will oppose any action that would land the hijackers in jail. In similar cases in the past, Chile has denied formal asylum, but has allowed the fugitives to make their own way to any other country that would accept them. Cuba could be the choice of this group. 25X1

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